

County of San Diego
Revised: September 30, 1999
Revised: July 1, 2003

MEDICAL EXAMINER INVESTIGATOR I
MEDICAL EXAMINER INVESTIGATOR II
MEDICAL EXAMINER INVESTIGATOR III

Class No. 005741
Class No. 005740
Class No. 005742

DEFINITION:

To conduct investigations of the circumstances of death in cases reported to the Medical Examiner.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:

Medical Examiner Investigators are sworn peace officers, allocated only to the department of the Medical Examiner, responsible for conducting investigations regarding the mode of death (e.g., suicide, homicide, or natural causes). The investigative work performed is distinguished from that of other law enforcement officials or medical personnel, which focus on criminal evidence, violations of law, or the biological cause of death.

Medical Examiner Investigator I: This is the entry-level in the Medical Examiner Investigator series. Incumbents work under immediate supervision and are expected to perform investigative work in a progressively more independent manner.

Medical Examiner Investigator II: This is the journey-level class in the Medical Examiner Investigator series. Under general supervision, incumbents work independently and perform the more complex investigations. This class differs from the next higher class, Medical Examiner Investigator III, in that the latter works in a lead capacity, directing the work activities and assisting in the training and evaluation of Medical Examiner Investigators.

Medical Examiner Investigator III: This is the lead-worker class in the Medical Examiner Investigator class series. Under general direction, incumbents provide technical assistance and training to Medical Examiner Investigators, and may conduct the most complex investigations. Incumbents in this class serve as lead workers responsible for supervision of investigative staff in the absence of the Supervising Medical Examiner Investigator. This class differs from the next higher class, Investigation Supervisor, in that the latter is a first line supervisor responsible for the Investigations Section of the Medical Examiner's department and the overall supervision and evaluation of all medical examiner investigators.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES:

Inquires into the manner, circumstances, and mode of any violent, traumatic, or unusual deaths occurring within the geographic boundaries of the County of San Diego; conducts visual inspection of the deceased and makes written notes of its condition (i.e., degree of rigor mortis, lividity, visual bruises or lacerations, temperature, purge, clothing, position); interviews and solicits statements from relatives and persons last in attendance or present at the time of death; searches for and impounds physical evidence which may have contributed to the death (i.e., drugs, weapons, suicide notes); works closely with law enforcement officials to identify the unknown dead; notifies next of kin; and secures the decedent's property; documents information gathered during the field investigation and utilizes toxicology reports, autopsy reports and decedents medical history in order to write a report of all deaths investigated for the Medical Examiner's case files; prepares written authorizations needed for the legal disposition of the decedent's body and property; prepares preliminary reports for the Public Administrator; prepares detailed descriptions of the unknown dead; answers inquiries regarding information obtained during field investigations and information contained in the Medical Examiner's case files; cooperates with other government officials; and acts as community liaison giving orientations and conducting tours of the Medical Examiner's facilities.

Medical Examiner Investigator III:

In addition to the duties listed above: trains, supervises, and evaluates subordinates regarding case investigations; handles complex investigations and critical consultation issues; performs quality assurance work and initiates corrective actions when errors are discovered; and coordinates work to ensure that deadlines are met.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

Knowledge Level: T = Thorough; G = General; -- = Not Applicable

Classification Level: I = Medical Examiner Investigator I
II = Medical Examiner Investigator II
III = Medical Examiner Investigator III

Knowledge of:

<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>	
G	T	T	Methods of collecting and preserving evidence.
G	T	T	Post-mortem changes to establish mode of death.
G	T	T	Techniques of interviewing and investigation.
G	G	T	Department and County policies and procedures.
G	G	G	Anatomy, Physiology, and Toxicology.
G	G	G	Medical terminology and their standard abbreviations.
G	G	G	Pharmacology, therapeutic dosages, length of drug action, and contradictions.
G	G	G	Applicable State and local laws pertaining to Medical Examiner and Coroner investigations.
--	--	G	Theories and techniques of supervision and/or project management.

Skills and Abilities to:

The following apply to all classes:

- Effectively maintain interpersonal and public relations.
- Effectively communicate in both oral and written English.
- Deliver oral presentations and write reports.
- Read and follow street maps.
- Research and analyze data or information.
- Type at least 20 words per minute.

EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE:

Education, training and/or experience which clearly demonstrate possession of the knowledge, skills and abilities stated above. Examples of qualifying education/experience are:

Medical Examiner Investigator I:

1. One (1) year paid experience as a full-time Medical Examiner Investigator, Deputy Coroner, Forensic Autopsy Assistant, Forensic Embalmer or Forensic Technician in a Coroner or Medical Examiner's facility; OR,
2. Two (2) years paid experience as a full-time Peace Officer (as defined in California Penal Code Sections 830 or 832), Paramedic, Registered Nurse, or served in a medical capacity within a medical facility.

Medical Examiner Investigator II:

1. One (1) year of experience conducting medico-legal investigations at the equivalent of the Medical Examiner Investigator I level as defined above, AND two (2) years of supervisory law enforcement experience, OR,
2. Two (2) years of experience conducting medico-legal investigations, one (1) year of which must be the equivalent of the Medical Examiner Investigator I level as defined above.

Medical Examiner Investigator III:

1. Two (2) years of experience conducting medico-legal investigations, one (1) year of which must be the equivalent of the Medical Examiner Investigator II level as defined above, AND two (2) years of supervisory law enforcement experience, OR,
2. Three (3) years of experience conducting medico-legal investigations, two (2) years of which must be the equivalent of the Medical Examiner Investigator II level as defined above.

SPECIAL NOTES, LICENSES, OR REQUIREMENTS:**License:**

A valid California Class C driver's license, or ability to arrange for field travel.

Requirements:

Must meet State of California minimum standards (Government Code Sect. 1031) for peace officers at time of appointment.

Background Investigation:

Must have a reputation for honesty and trustworthiness with no felony convictions. Misdemeanor convictions may be disqualifying depending on number, severity, and recency. Applicants will be subject to a thorough background check. Must be found by a licensed physician to be free from any physical, emotional, or mental conditions, which might adversely affect exercising powers of a peace officer.

Working Conditions:

Subject to standby, call-back and shift work.

Physical Requirements:

Must be able to 1) traverse rough terrain to reach scene of death, 2) lift 50 pounds, and 3) enter and egress various forms of transportation (e.g., helicopters).

Probationary Period:

Incumbents appointed to permanent positions in these classes shall serve a probationary period of twelve months (Civil Service Rule 4.2.5).